



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

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ADMINISTRATION JOINS CHAFEE IN ATTEMPTING TO PROTECT CHEMICAL PLANTS FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS

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addressed as soon as possible.”***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) today applauded the Bush Administration for recognizing the growing problem of chemical plant security, and the need for Federal regulation. The praise came as representatives from the Department of Homeland Security testified before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC), to call for legislation to implement a Federal standard to address the problem. A member of HSGAC, Chafee has been an advocate for stronger controls on chemical plants. In 2003, Chafee was instrumental in bringing together both Democrats and Republicans to craft compromise legislation that would have made plants safer from terrorist attack.

“I believe we need legislation to help secure our chemical facilities from terrorist attacks. During the last Congress, I worked with my colleagues on the Committee on Environment and Public Works to bridge the gap between two widely divergent bills dealing with chemical facility security. As this issue now moves to the newly reorganized Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, I look forward to again working with members on both sides of the aisle to draft legislation to achieve this objective. I applaud Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff for adding the voice of the Administration to this effort,” Senator Chafee said.

Testifying before HSGAC was Robert Stephan, a top deputy to Secretary Chertoff, who is visiting both houses of Congress to advocate a plan for legislation. He called for a series of proactive, protective steps, which would be federally enforced and would take into account factors such as the proximity of chemical plants to surrounding communities.

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Currently, assessing and improving the security of chemical plants is on a voluntary basis. The Government Accountability Office has estimated that only 1,100 out of the 15,000 plants producing dangerous chemicals have participated in adopting the voluntary standards put forth by the American Chemistry Council.

Federal data indicates that there are approximately 123 chemical plants that if attacked could expose a million citizens or more to a cloud of toxic gas.

“This is not an easy issue upon which to legislate. The diversity in chemical facilities, the types of chemicals stored at each facility, and each facility’s location make it very difficult to craft a one-size-fits-all solution that protects communities while allowing chemical companies to maintain their economic viability. Nevertheless, this is an extremely serious issue which must be addressed as soon as possible,” Chafee further stated.

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